

Figure 8: *Estimated probability of voting by identification requirement and age. The graphs plot the estimated probability of voting by an average registered voter respondent from the Current Population Survey (2000–2006) given different voter identification regimes as education levels vary. The estimates come from a logistic regression of the probability of voting controlling for demographic characteristics. The dashed lines are the confidence intervals for the random effects term only, and do not include the uncertainty in the estimate; these are provided for convenience only.*

dential elections, a multilevel binary logit model that allows us to appropriately model how covariates from both the individual and state level, and their interaction, affect the decision to participate (Gelman and Hill 2006). In addition, a random effects model of the ordinal nature of the voter identification treatment variable is also employed. By combining these two approaches we are able to simultaneously get the most out of sparse data to answer important policy questions, particularly about subgroups, and to address concerns about properly modeling the ordinal treatment variable. We find no evidence that voter identification requirements reduce participation at the aggregate level. At the individual level, voter identification requirements of the strictest forms — combination requirements of presenting identification and matching signatures, as well as photo identification requirements — have a negative impact on voter participation relative to the weakest requirement of stating one’s name. In general, there does not seem to be a discriminatory impact of the requirements for some subgroups, such as nonwhite registered voters. However, we do find that for registered voters with lower levels of educational

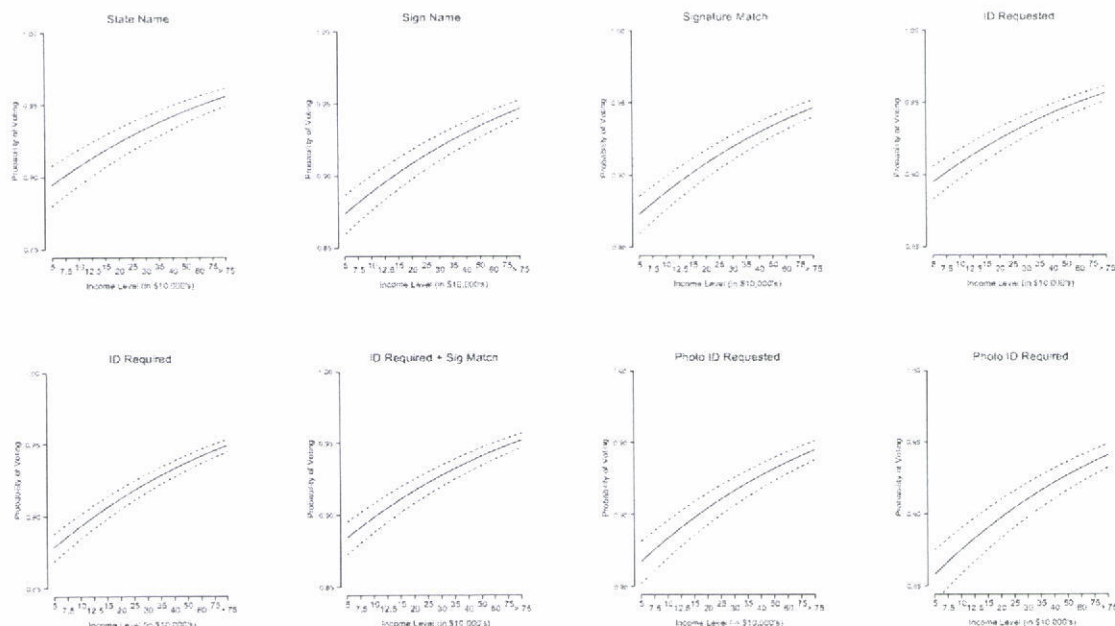


Figure 9: *Estimated probability of voting by identification requirement and income level. The graphs plot the estimated probability of voting by an average registered voter respondent from the Current Population Survey (2000-2006) given different voter identification regimes as education levels vary. The estimates come from a logistic regression of the probability of voting controlling for demographic characteristics. The dashed lines are the confidence intervals for the random effects term only, and do not include the uncertainty in the estimate; these are provided for convenience only.*

attainment or lower income, stricter voter identification requirements do lead to lower turnout.

Further research is necessary, however, as there is little information in the current data on photo identification requirements — and only with the passage of time will we build up larger databases with more information on the behavior of registered voters in states with different voter identification requirements. Our analysis, using all of the available CPS Voter Supplement data from 2000 through 2006, demonstrates the methodological and substantive importance of examining how voter identification requirements affect voter behavior, as some states move to implement new voter identification requirements and others do not. Additionally, our methodological innovation in this paper, utilizing a multilevel model to study voter participation, is an important advance in the field. While our focus here has been on a new substantive problem, our model did provide important new estimates for the canonical questions about voter participation that have existed in the research literature for the past few decades. We believe that this multilevel approach towards studying the question of voter participation, as well as many other questions of voting behavior that involve data measured at multiple levels, will represent an important

advance in the study of this important substantive question.

However, one methodological issue will need to be addressed in the next round of our research, and that will be to incorporate a correction in the model for the misreporting of turnout. While the misreporting of turnout in the CPS Voter Supplement is not as severe as that noted for other surveys of voter behavior (for example, the American National Election Survey as studied in past research, e.g., Burden 2000), it is potentially a problem. The 2004 CPS Voter Supplement reports a discrepancy of 3% between the CPS estimate of turnout and the official count of the Clerk of the House of Representatives; historically, the disparity has ranged between 4 and 12%.¹⁷ Given that research has shown that misreporting of turnout is systematically related to demographic attributes like education, and also varies by race and ethnicity, clearly adjusting for misreporting of turnout in models of participation is an important methodological step towards obtaining consistent estimates of how factors like identification requirements affect turnout.¹⁸

Finally, we need to bring other data to bear as we seek to answer research questions regarding voter identification laws. Our analysis, and others like it using CPS Voter Supplement data, focuses on what we know of voter identification laws across states and how those laws, if implemented as written, might influence the behavior of registered voters. We cannot now easily study, however, the extent to which these laws are not being implemented as written; for example, it might be the case that in some places registered voters (or just some registered voters) are being asked to provide photographic identification when they try to vote, when that is not current state law, or that in other places registered voters (or again just some registered voters) are not being asked for identification when that should be required under state law. Additional research should focus on implementation of voter identification laws, both in states with such requirements and those without, to determine the extent to which they are being correctly applied, and if incorrectly applied, whether that is affecting the ability of potential voters to exercise their franchise effectively (Alvarez, Atkeson and Hall, 2007; Atkeson et al. 2007). Furthermore, future research should also look at the requirement identifications now in place, as required by HAVA, and whether those additional identification requirements are imposing additional hurdles for eligible citizens as they seek to register to vote.

7. REFERENCES

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¹⁷See the report of the U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004", PS 20-556, March 2006. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p20-556.pdf>.

¹⁸As we noted earlier, there has been much research on the attributes of voters who misreport turnout, for example Abramson and Claggett 1984, 1986, and 1991; Bernstein, Chadha and Montjoy 2001; Claussen 1968; Hill and Hurley 1984; Katosh and Traugott 1981; Sigelman 1982; Silver, Anderson and Abramson 1986; Traugott and Katosh 1979.

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